

POVERTY

CHASTITY

OBEDIENCE

TRANSPARENT

KNOWING

TRANSPARENT

BEING

TRANSPARENT

DOING

MEDITATION

CONTEMPLATION

PRAYER

Only the poet seems to do that well, so listen to this little bit of poetry.

Then up came Jairus, who was president of the synagogue, and fell at Jesus' feet begging him to come into his house, for his daughter and only child, about twelve years old, was dying. But as he went, the crowd nearly suffocated him. Among them was a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had derived no benefit from anybody's treatment. She came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak, with the result that her hemorrhage stopped at once. "Who was that that touched me?" said Jesus. When everybody denied it, Peter remonstrated him, "Master, the crowds are all around you and are pressing you on all sides. A thousand people must have touched you." Jesus said, "Somebody touched me, for I felt the power went out from me." When the woman realized that she had not escaped notice, she came forth, trembling, and fell at his feet and admitted before everybody why she had had to touch him and how she had been instantaneously cured. "Daughter," said Jesus, "it is your faith that has healed you. Go in peace."

I want to suggest that that is what I mean by transparent doing. There was one who was walking down the road as utterly intensified obedience, utterly intensified prayer. He was going under utter necessity, out of utter creativity. And in the midst of that kind of transparent doing, one touched him, and discovered that merely to touch him was to be immediately at one with Being itself. That is, a miracle occurs as the in-breaking of sheer humanness through the contact with intensified doing.

I want to use four categories to try to say that much more complicatedly and long-handedly than that poetry did. I want to suggest that transparent doing is first of all sheer role; and that secondly it is radical integrity; thirdly, it is final commitment; and lastly, transfigured authenticity.

Transparent doing is first of all **sheer role**. Humanness itself is sheer role. That's all humanness is—a role. It's only being a role. I show a multitude of roles. I am a hundred roles most of my existence. And yet in the midst of being a hundred roles I have the possibility of deciding and choosing to be one role in history. No, not deciding and choosing: inventing one role in history. That I invent the role that I am. That's sheer invention. It comes no other way. I am that role, and if you change that role then you change who I am and I am no longer; I am something else. I am sheer role, and that is sheer invention.

I think of that movie, *He Who Must Die*. You think of that man. He had two roles that he played. One he came upon—it was sort of given to him. The other he invented. You ask yourself which of those roles invented humanness in that man. I'd want to suggest that the role that invents humanness, that invents the relationship to the wholly other, is the sheer role I mean to point to as transparent doing.

Secondly, it's the sheer role of utter selfhood. It's audacious self-affirmation which can only happen in the Word, otherwise you're in a horrible situation. Most of my life has been a weird kind of self-depreciation. It's not the outward kind that you often see when people cower over in a corner somewhere and refuse to do anything. Those of you that know me know that I've never been that kind. I get whatever it is out there on the table for everybody to see. But there's a weird kind of self-depreciation that often inhibits that. It's the kind of self-depreciation that says I can't do it, but what I can do is muddle in there and make somebody else who's responsible do what I want to do. I often come off like a ready reference system. If anybody says anything significant, I can immediately find a reference that will document what he says and gain my self-significance from his having said that. It's a kind of self-depreciation that doesn't risk itself, but when somebody else has risked himself, it will work out all the details. In the midst of a summer program like this, we might decide that all five hundred of us should risk ourselves and go to Woodlawn to church. If somebody decides that, I can call the CTA and get all the trains there on time. That's the kind of self-depreciation that doesn't risk creativity. It only works out little surface details of somebody else's existence.

And that leads to the particularity of a human being's own particular is-ness. One of the things that I miss about this summer is work days. In other summers, when you were doing the training program, one of the things you thought you needed to do was change the pattern, so you injected a work day. I have since discovered that that wasn't what we were doing at all. We were doing another kind of training in which we got clarity on who it was that was doing transparent doing in their lives. For as you look at two people working, it becomes very clear who are the ones who are doing the transparent deed and who are the ones who are simply filling up the time. The one who is doing the transparent deed is the one whose life is finally committed to that deed he's doing. He puts his entire existence into that particular washing of a section of wall. The one who holds his life out of that is not finally committed to that particularity. His deed becomes the filling up of time and points only to the wasting away of time.

The transparent deed is the deed that unites man with the death wish and with life itself, and releases in life that very consciousness of the death wish itself. To put that another way, it is final commitment to the eternal, at the same time that it is commitment to the earth. As Kazantzakis puts it, it is turning matter into spirit. That's the transparent deed. It's taking that little hunk of wall and bleeding it of every bit of meaning that that little bit of wall washing can have in one's life, bleeding it of the entire meaning of life expended on behalf of other men, of a life put forward, of a life handed out. I think of Lawrence: "Even if it's only in the whiteness of a washed pocket handkerchief," it's the transmitting of life into that moment.

I think if I had known this a few years ago, I wouldn't have been taken in by the moralistic liberal arts college that I went to where they taught me that when you come across space age expressions you would translate them into something like getting a long perspective on things. But you would never grasp that it had something to do with draining the meaning for your own particular existence out of that moment. Then you see that taking the view of the eternal does not mean standing down the road thirty years or looking back, though that may be helpful in doing what you're out to do. It means taking the entire meaning of your own personal existence out of that moment and draining it of that moment. Transparent doing is draining of that meaning for every man that sees you in the doing of that deed. It's taking the profane and turning it into the utterly sacred.

Paul wrote to some of his friends on that issue—remember in Romans he wrote, "If you guys want to eat the meat that's been sacrificed for the idols, fine, that's all right. You can eat anything you want to eat. But if your eating of that meat causes some to lose faith, that's not transparent doing." He didn't put it that way; he said don't do it. In everything you're doing you're out to relate the profane to the sacred and show the sacred within.

I think that's what Luther was pointing to when he said that the natural man does not fear God purposely, that the one who operates out of moralism is never able to bleed the utter significance of Being Itself out of that moment. He can never do that. The transparent deed is the deed done in final commitment to the eternal Final Commitment—that means commitment unto death.

We meet here on Pentecost, spending time talking about transparent doing. For Pentecost is the time of the giving of the spirit and has always been one of the key times of the giving of the spirit. And this baptism is above all things the sign of the giving of the death. It is the death to the entire past that one has been that is the sign in baptism. And what one discovers is that in the timing of that death it is the giving of the spirit, it is the giving of life, it is the giving of utter significance, that opens all of life. It's the commitment unto death that is the doing the deed from the graveside view. It's looking at one's entire existence in all his doing from the perspective of the grave, and seeing in that the finality of every deed that he does: the utter finality of it and the utter nothingness of it. I think of Armstrong again. On the anniversary of his landing on the moon he was complaining on the radio that he had hoped that surely the space program would go further ahead than it has in this year since he landed on the moon. In that year I think he had begun to grasp the nothingness of the doing that

the lens, it does not do that. Transparent doing is the radical integrity that can focus all of life into one spot.

Or it can strip away, if you will, everything that is unnecessary to the doing that is at hand. That telescope has the capacity to focus on one star and blot out every other star so that only the light of that one star can be seen, and thus can be magnified and intensified. Radical doing is the focused thrust, even if there are thousands of ambiguities still in the midst of that doing. But in the midst of all of that doing, and all of the ambiguities, there is a focus, there is a oneness to that thrust.

And it's the integrity of doing all of history. In the doing that is transparent doing all of history is done. It's not just some one part. It's that which holds history together, if you will, past and future in the present. That's what radical integrity is. It holds all of history. It's like the steel in the ship's hull. As long as that steel has integrity, the ship stays together. When that steel loses integrity, the ship breaks up and sinks. So also it is with human personality. When a man's integrity and his personality disappear, when he shows up a different person every day, there's no way to relate to him. His doing is no longer transparent.

It's the integrity of doing all of history, of doing all of the past. It's doing Hosea, it's doing Paul, it's doing Columbus. I think of Neil Armstrong here as he went to the moon. What was so fascinating about the doing of Neil Armstrong going to the moon was that he was summing up in that trip all of the searching after the knowable unknown that man in his whole lifetime had been doing, summed up in that one journey; and in that, behind that, revealing all of the searching after the unknowable unknown that mankind has always been about.

It's the integrity of doing all of the past and doing all of the future and doing every part of life for the next four years, for the next forty years, for the next thousand years.

Listen to this one short snatch from *Dune*:

"When will we solve it?" the Fremen asked. "When will we see Arrakis as a paradise?" In the manner of a teacher answering a child who has asked the sum of two plus two, Kynes told them, "From three hundred to five hundred years." A lesser folk might have howled in dismay. But the Fremen had learned patience with men with whips. It was a bit longer than they had anticipated, but they could all see that the blessed day was coming. They tightened their sashes and went back to work. Somehow, the disappointment made the prospect of paradise more real.

That's the doing of the entire future. That's the radical integrity that I mean to point to. It's the deed that stays at the present looking backward at the blood-spattered trail of being itself which has brought all of history to this point, and looking forward to the direction in which that blood-spattered trail may go. Doing the deed that does both of those trails is the radical integrity of doing all of history, or doing all of the globe, doing the entire globe, doing every culture, and radically doing your own culture, for you cannot do every culture unless you radically do your own culture.

I get rather tired of people that talk of building the tactical models for the local congregation who say, "I don't understand why we spend so much of our time putting everything in neat little boxes, you know, getting utterly rational. We ought to be just a little more spontaneous and respond to the moment as it comes to us. As we go out with all these little boxes of rationality organizing our year, nothing will ever happen." You almost want to say that without rationally organizing the year, nothing will happen. But then you also hear the perversion, "My God, if we ever tried to do one of those little boxes, it'd be terrible."

But how do we grasp that the only way you and I can move is to utterly, utterly take our rationality and force it to the bottom? There will never be a universal global deed done through watering down everybody's diversity until we get to the lowest common denominator. I think it was

through prayer and obedience if you will, and see the transparent doing that was there. It was the doing that created fascination that ordered the chaos that controls the whirlwind and allows the dance of freedom to take place. The Zorba dance has everything of knowing and doing to laugh—the fascination to see one who can dance in the midst of that. Transfigured authenticity is that which creates fascination and elicits dread of being over against that which is un-understandable, that which is unapproachable, that being which is incommensurable with any other being.

The casting out of demons—I think of Jesus in the land of the Gerasenes where he met the man who had demons, thousands of demons. And he cast them all out, and then everybody drove Jesus out of town. I mean the dread that comes to every man who harbors demons in his life and makes them at home there. In the casting out of demons is the dread elicited by the requirement of humanness in responsibility. There is a dread that is experienced when a deed discloses the eternal insecurity which is your life, when it doesn't just show up as that poor insecure me but shows up as insecurity of mankind itself. When that is communicated, dread is elicited, and that's transparent doing. It is the doing of the suffering servant who makes clear in his suffering that that is the role of humanness for every man and the dread of every man as he thinks about picking up the role of suffering. It is the deed that I mean to point to by transfigured authenticity, the deed which is the awful victory.

I used to go to a Methodist Youth Fellowship camp when I was in about the tenth grade. I remember one minister who was in the camp I went to. His name was Sam. I don't remember his last name, but he always smiled. No matter what happened, he smiled. When the heat got up to 102, he smiled. If his table didn't get served dinner, he smiled. That would be hard for some of us. Whatever happened, Sam smiled. Now you sense, when you get a little older, there was a falseness in that smile, but whether or not, the address of that smile on my life was a final victory that was victorious over everything that occurred.

The awful victory, with the dread added to that, is what I mean to point to by the transparent deed—the deed of the awful victory, which is every deed that you can do and accomplish, but is always the deed which is a gift to you. It is the gift of Moses who stood on the mountain and just by seeing the rear end of God had his face seared so that it shone and he had to keep a veil over his face. They could not look even at Moses' face because his face had seen God. That's the awful victory. That's the doing of the crucifixion and the doing of the resurrection, the radical repentance and the living forgiveness.

I want to close by reading to you poetry from Kazantzakis' *Saviors of God*:

1. The ultimate most holy form of theory is action.
2. Not to look on passively while the spark leaps from generation to generation, but to leap and to burn with it!
3. Action is the widest gate of deliverance. It alone can answer the questionings of the heart. Amid the labyrinthine complexities of the mind it finds the shortest route. No, it does not "find"—it creates its way, hewing to right and left through resistances of logic and matter.
4. Why did you struggle behind phenomena to track down the Invisible? What was the purpose of all your warlike, your erotic march through flesh, race, man, plants, and animals? Why the mystic marriage beyond these labors, the perfect embracement, the bacchic and raging contact in darkness and in light?
5. That you might reach the point from which you began—the ephemeral, palpitating, mysterious point of your existence—with new eyes, with new ears, with a new sense of taste, smell, touch, with new brains.
6. Our profound human duty is not to interpret or to cast light on the rhythm of God's march, but to adjust, as much as we can, the rhythm of our small and fleeting life to his.
7. Only thus may we mortals succeed in achieving something immortal, because then we collaborate with One who is Deathless.
8. Only thus may we conquer mortal sin, the concentration on details, the narrowness of our brains; only thus may we transubstantiate into freedom the slavery of earthen matter given us to mold.

31. My God is not All-holy. He is full of cruelty and savage justice, and he chooses the best mercilessly. He is without compassion; he does not trouble himself about men or animals; nor does he care for virtues and ideas. He loves all these things for a moment, then smashes them eternally and passes on.

32. He is a power that contains all things, that begets all things. He begets them, loves them, and destroys them. And if we say, "Our God is an erotic wind and shatters all bodies that he may drive on," and if we remember that eros always works through blood and tears, destroying every individual without mercy—then we shall approach his dread face a little closer.

33. My God is not All-knowing. His brain is a tangled skein of light and darkness which he strives to unravel in the labyrinth of the flesh.

34. He stumbles and fumbles. He gropes to the right and turns back; swings to the left and sniffs the air. He struggles above chaos in anguish. Crawling, straining, groping for unnumbered centuries, he feels the muddy coils of his brain being slowly suffused with light.

35. On the surface of his heavy, pitch-black head he begins with an indescribable struggle to create eyes by which to see, ears by which to hear.

36. My God struggles on without certainty. Will he conquer? Will he be conquered? Nothing in the Universe is certain. He flings himself into uncertainty; he gambles all his destiny at every moment.

37. He clings to warm bodies; he has no other bulwark. He shouts for help; he proclaims a mobilization throughout the Universe.

38. It is our duty, on hearing his Cry, to run under his flag, to fight by his side, to be lost or to be saved with him.

39. God is imperiled. He is not almighty, that we may cross our hands, waiting for certain victory. He is not all-holy, that we may wait trustingly for him to pity and to save us.

40. Within the province of our ephemeral flesh all of God is imperiled. He cannot be saved unless we save him with our own struggles; nor can we be saved unless he is saved.

41. We are one. From the blind worm in the depths of the ocean to the endless arena of the Galaxy, only one person struggles and is imperiled: You. And within your small and earthen breast only one thing struggles and is imperiled: the Universe.